

For the soldiers & airmen of the Massachusetts National Guard

The Force of Freedom

Minuteman

Summer 2003

Magazine

Target Practice

Massachusetts Champion

726th in Iraq

26th's EIB

Frontline Women

180th Returns
from Iraq
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On the cover

An A-10 with the 104th Fighter Wing streaks through the New York sky after dropping 500-pound bombs on a simulated target at Fort Drum.

- Photo Illustration by Spc. David Claffey, STARC PAO

Minut



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AIR BOUND PIT STOP: Even with a formidable 30 mm gattling gun mounted on the front, the A-10 attack fighters of the Massachusetts National Guard's 104th Fighter Wing are useless on the ground. That's where the airmen of the 444th Forward Operating Location (FOL) at Fort Drum, NY, are needed.

Like a pit crew during a car race, the unit refuels, repairs and readies the aircraft for its offensive strike. The only difference between the Air National Guard and NASCAR is that the Guard vehicles carry bombs.

- Photo by Spc. David Claffey, STARC PAO

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WHERE THE STREETS HAVE NO NAME

Story and Photo by Capt. Theodore A. Sobocienski, 726th Maintenance Battalion



At the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Yawkey Way are very few things that resemble the Back Bay Fens of Boston, but the soldiers from the 726th Maintenance Battalion try not to notice. Simple things like naming the dusty streets of Tallil Air Base in Iraq can be very therapeutic.

The Natick-based unit, with the help of the 110th Maintenance Company out of Ayer, has been keeping the base of about 15,000 troops operating by maintaining weapons, communications equipment and vehicles.

They have also assembled support teams that traverse war-torn Iraqi roads to recover damaged and disabled vehicles.

"This is the first time the unit is changing from a maintenance mission to a support operations mission," said Maj. Mark C. Favazza, a Georgetown native and maintenance officer for the unit. "It's challenging having to balance maintenance, quartermaster and supply missions." The 726th covers almost 600 miles of open roadways, with teams stationed at stops all along the main supply route from Kuwait.

Arriving in early May, the unit has had to get used to bulletproof vests, loaded weapons and canteen water that quickly became undrinkable due to the

heat. Fortunately, the soldiers have improvised, wrapping moist socks around their canteens to keep them cool and naming the blast-crated streets to keep their spirits high.

The unit has found a way to modify almost everything they have touched. Their office at the base now boasts new front and back porches, picnic tables circle the buildings, and they made improvements to the floors, power system and lights.

"The soldiers are doing great," said Lt. Col. William Callahan, commander of the 726th. "I'm proud of the part the battalion has played in Operation Iraqi Freedom."

Since arriving at the base, the battalion has completed over 200 maintenance job orders, and recovery teams have already conducted over 20 missions into areas of Iraq that are still considered hostile.

For the Marines, also stationed at the base providing close air support in the area, the unit's work has been vital to their success. It is a high profile job that the unit likes doing.

"Members of the battalion are proud to be doing their wartime mission," said Callahan. "It's a highly positive experience, being here in Iraq and helping out."

Sgt. 1st Class Gary R. Jewell from the 726th Maintenance Battalion approaches a dirt devil at Tallil Air Base in Iraq. The heat of the desert often produces these mini-tornados, sending dust into the air and blowing over any tents that get in their way.

- Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jeffrey Ring, 726th Maintenance Battalion

The orange skies of Iraq after a dust storm reduce visibility to about 30 feet at Tallil Air Base in Iraq. Iraqis call storms like these "Shamals", and they sometimes hinder the 726th Maintenance Battalion's recovery missions.

- Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jeffrey Ring, 726th Maintenance Battalion



Women of Battle

Story and Photo by Sgt. Reeba Critser, 28th Public Affairs Detachment

To this day, the U.S. military has its doors closed to women performing combat arms duties like infantry and cavalry.

Nevertheless, three female soldiers in southeastern Afghanistan are breaking barriers as military police. Sgt. Nicola Hall, Cpl. Jill Osowski and Sgt. Stephanie Blazo have all recently accompanied infantrymen to complete MP missions.

Hall is the first woman to accompany the infantry in combat operations in theatre.

"Taking females out on missions was new to the infantrymen," said Hall, 21st Military Police Company, Fort Bragg, N.C. The female MPs assist infantrymen when Afghan women are searched.

"It's tough work, what they do," said Osowski, 972nd Military Police Company, Massachusetts National Guard, Melrose, Mass. "It's a privilege to do it with them." The three travel with the men on almost every mission and have gained a new perspective on an infantryman's work.

"I like doing what the guys do," said Blazo, 972nd MP Co. "I get a better appreciation of their job."

Although working with infantrymen can be fun, Osowski said, she also stressed that the MPs take their job seriously and play hard.

"You have to make sure you're in good physical condition," said Osowski, from Chicopee, Mass. "On my last mission, we walked 18 clicks (kilometers) with all of my gear on."

Hall agreed with Osowski.

"I'm learning what grunts do," said Hall. "They learn what I do. As MPs, we search people and look for weapons. It's our SOP (standard operating procedure). I never thought we would be walking for hours or be on the front."

"They've (82nd Airborne soldiers) been nothing but respectful to us," she continued. "As long as you walk, carry your own weight and don't whine, you're respected."

Because Afghanistan is a male-dominated country, the trio receives a lot of attention when they conduct their missions.

"The men and kids are shocked to see us carry a weapon," said Blazo, from Revere, Mass. "But we haven't had trouble with them so far."

The need for women in Afghanistan combat operations has recently risen.

"I'm not surprised that they're (82nd Airborne) using females," Hall said. "Females play a bigger part in combat now. In Israel, women are strapping bombs on themselves - suicide bombers. It's come to be true here."

For the last two months, Hall was the only female performing searches on Afghan women. She was the MP that discovered Afghan women hiding weapons under their burkas last month. Since then, Osowski and Blazo have joined her from Uzbekistan.

"We're invading their houses and searching persons," Osowski said. "The males are not expecting the women to be searched. So, we're sending out the message that this behavior will not be tolerated."

Although these women are pioneers in their field, none of them want to pursue the option of women in combat military occupational specialties.

"It's difficult, vigorous, mentally stressful," Hall said. "I know as females that we can do it. But for cohesion, it's not good. Cohesion is what makes the Army click. It's not women's lib—I'm just here doing my job."

Sgt. Nicola Hall, 21st Military Police Company, Fort Bragg, N.C., and Cpl. Jill Osowski, 972nd MP Co., Massachusetts National Guard, observe a vehicle drive by their perimeter during a presence patrol in southeastern Afghanistan. They are two of the three female MPs conducting missions with infantry patrols in Afghanistan.



Guard troops not "Balkan" at deployment

By Spc. Mathew Benedetti, STARC PAO

The 86th Medical Detachment, an aviation unit based at Camp Edwards, left Massachusetts for their mobilization station in preparation for a 10 month tour of duty in Bosnia on June 14. They are replacing members of their unit serving in Bosnia as part of peacekeeping efforts.

Sgt. Justin Petrillo, a firefighter and paramedic in Stoneham, said that it is always "tough to go" on a long deployment, but he is prepared. Having been in the Navy for seven years and the Guard for two years, he is no stranger to missions abroad. Petrillo has been to Bosnia before, but only briefly and is eager. "I am ready to go and look forward to the experience," he said.

Of the 21 soldiers mobilized for the deployment, most indicated a willingness to serve in the Balkans. "I think it will be a good experience," said Thaddeus Chaboir, a Blackhawk chief from Rehoboth. "I am happy to help people so decimated by war and to have an impact in the rebuilding of their society."

Soldiers recognize that the presence of the American military in the region prevents major hostilities. "I am excited to go and know how important our role is to the people," said Spc. Shauna Farrel, Flight Operations Specialist, recently transferred from Delta Company 126th Aviation in Ct. to the 86th in order to go to Bosnia. "I have been in the Guard for six years and this mission will be my first overseas." Access to e-mail will help bridge the distance between soldiers and family members. The unit is expected home in April 2004.

Cpl. Mike Fitzgerald, a flight medic from Gardner, was excited to go, "I am looking forward to going, it should be an experience." Although the deployment is for a considerable period, soldiers of the 86th Medical Detachment are ready for the challenge.

Statue rededicated in Framingham

By 2nd Lt. Anthony Falvey, 79th Troop Command

On June 17, 1905, the Blacksmith Minuteman Statue was first presented to the community of Framingham. Donated by The Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) along with proceeds from the town of Framingham, the Blacksmith Minuteman Statue represents a true symbol of historical and educational significance, with a

strong American patriotic presence.

On June 22, 2003, a restored Blacksmith Minuteman Statue was re-dedicated to Framingham.

The re-dedication ceremony was held inside of the Framingham Memorial Building, due to rain. Andrea Crossman, a member of DAR, acted as chief organizer of the historic event.

In the last five years, Crossman and fellow members of DAR raised money to restore the statue.

"We decided on having the ceremony on June 22, because it falls close to the original dedication and we were able to have Mr. Bryce Larrabee present for the ceremony," said Crossman. Mr. Larrabee is 94 years old.

In 1941, the original display area for the statue proved to be in a high traffic environment. The town of Framingham decided it was best to move the statue to a new location on Buckminster Square.

Mr. Larrabee's rigging company was contracted to move the statue to its present day location.

Landing a few more years

By Spc. David Claffey, STARC PAO

With 12 years of military service and a two-and-a-half month trip to Bosnia behind him, Winchester native Philip Hager left Logan Airport May 30 with a reborn commitment to protecting this nation.

In the airport's international wing, only minutes after stepping off the plane from a two month internship at the U.S. Embassy in Sarajevo, Hager re-enlisted in the Massachusetts National Guard for three more years. Family and friends greeted him at a small ceremony in the terminal's lobby, along with members of the 182nd Infantry's Scout Platoon from Dorchester, where he will continue his duties as a squad leader.

The trip to Bosnia was part of Hager's coursework with Suffolk University, where he is pursuing a master's in international relations, and while he knew a bit of the language before heading overseas, communication was still a challenge.

"There were situations where my knowledge of the language was enough to understand conversations," said Hager, "But they would speak faster because they figured I was fluent. It is amazing how much you information you can get just from hand signals."

Working in the economic office for the State Department there, Hager said the internship provided him with opportunities to work on his interpersonal skills and earn valuable experience as a federal employee in a foreign setting.

"After visiting countries that have been through conflict, you realize how fortunate Americans are," said Hager. While the work was unpaid, he still walked away with something he felt he couldn't learn in a classroom.

Like many soldier-students, Hager has taken advantage of the educational benefits offered by the Guard, using both the Massachusetts tuition waiver and the Montgomery G.I. Bill. For more information the programs offered by the education office, check out their website at www.mass.gov/guard/education.

Making a "Big" difference for local children

By Andrew Shaad, Big Brother Association

Like most members of the armed forces, National Guardsmen Greg Ladd likes to make the most of each day. "I was looking for a positive way to use my time. A friend suggested Big Brothers, and the more I learned the more it appealed to me."

He is not alone. Many active and retired soldiers gladly make time to be Big Brothers and Big Sisters two or more times each month for nine months to one year. Lt. Troy LeFever from Hanscom Air Force Base enjoys watching movies and attending sporting events with his little brother. "This is the easiest way to strengthen communities and connect our generation with the next," he said. Retired Marine Corps corporal and local Big Brother Conrad Rodriguez was President George W. Bush's guest at the State of The Union address to honor the "little moments" of all Big Brothers and Big Sisters.

Founded in 1904, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America is the world's largest one-to-one mentoring organization. A "Big" is simply a volunteer age 18 or older (the oldest volunteer in Massachusetts is 76!) who agrees to be a friend to one child. Matches enjoy activities such as video games, the outdoors or just getting together. Littles are children age seven to 17 who simply want to hang out with a trusted adult friend.

"You don't need any special talents, skills or experience," said Ladd. "We do just about anything that comes to mind. Big Brothers supplies tickets to events like the theater, Celtics, Bruins and Revolution. Otherwise, the two of us will go to the Blue Hill mountains, a museum, or when I'm busy we'll run errands."

The enrollment process is "as easy as 1-2-3": First, an application starts the process. A member of

the staff will then contact the applicant to arrange a one-to-one interview. Second, an applicant simply selects 3 people who have known them for at least one year and can comment on the applicant's ability to serve as a "Big". The third step is a 45-minute conversational interview with a professional volunteer enrollment specialist.

For more information, contact Big Brothers Big Sisters at (888) 412-BIGS or online at www.bbmb.org or www.bigsister.org.

Voss inducted into Hall of Fame

By Sgt. Jordan St. John

Col. James W. Voss of Kingston, New Hampshire was recently inducted into the Officer Candidate School (OCS) Hall of Fame at the Massachusetts National Guard's 101st Regiment Regional Training Institute (RTI) on Camp Edwards, Cape Cod, Mass.

Voss, who has over 31 years of military service in the Army National Guard, serves as Deputy Commander of the Massachusetts Medical Command, Office of the State Surgeon, Hanscom Air Force Base. In his civilian career, he is a configuration control engineer for the Engine System Design and Integration team at General Electric Aircraft Engines in Lynn.

Voss was appointed to the Officer Candidate School Hall of Fame during ceremonies held in late March. He is a graduate of Class 40 of the Massachusetts Military Academy and his induction to the Hall of Fame is a result of his distinguished career in the Massachusetts Army National Guard and being federally recognized as colonel, United States Army.

"It is an honor for me to be recognized by the institute and inducted to this Hall of Fame," said Voss. "I thank all of those great NCOs and officers I worked with over the years who taught me so well. I am truly humbled to be a permanent part of Officer Candidate School history."

He went on to explain that family support is a key element for anyone pursuing a military career. "Balancing a military career, one in the civilian world, and keeping a home life is a challenge," Voss explained. "I am grateful to my beautiful wife and best friend, Diane, who has been my inspiration the whole time. She is an amazing woman."

With his induction to the Hall of Fame, Voss becomes a member of a highly prestigious Massachusetts National Guard organization whose membership reaches back to the first OCS class of 1915 and which includes just over 150 men and women.

26th Infantry Brigade's Quest for the EIB

Story by Spc. Matthew Benedetti and Spc. David Claffey, STARC PAO

The true test of a soldier's heart is found in his performance under fire. The next best alternative may be the 26th Infantry Brigade's Expert Infantry Badge (EIB) Competition at Camp Edwards.

Seventy-nine soldiers from the 104th, 182nd, and 181st Infantry Regiments, along with the 102nd Infantry Regiment from Connecticut, took part in the EIB qualifications during their Annual Training, with only 12 completing the rigorous test.

Guard members had to complete 35 infantry tasks with almost no margin for error, then trek up and down the Cape Cod Canal on a 12-mile road march with a rucksack strapped to their back.

"Almost everything in the Army focuses on teamwork, but the EIB is more about the individual," said Spc. Wayne Turley, the Nuclear, Biological and Chemical station scorer. "Not only does a person have to want it, but he has to work hard to get it."

While units do train the soldiers weeks prior to qualification, success depends on the individual's ability to perform under pressure.

"Everyone stresses when it comes to the EIB," said Sgt. Tim Forrester, supply sergeant for D Company, 1st battalion, 182nd Infantry. "Unfortunately, the stress is usually self-created. Guys beat themselves up if they don't pass, but there is no shame in not getting it the first time."

Forrester, the scorer for M-60 Range Card station, knows what it is like to be in the testing soldier's shoes. He was unable to earn the badge in his first attempt, but like many soldiers, the experience helped him prepare for subsequent tries.

"The EIB is more mental than physical," said Sgt. Michael Aparicio, who earned his badge while serving in Korea and is now with the 102nd. "There is a lot of memorization, and the sequences have to be precise." Guard members are also at a disadvantage because training happens once a month instead of all year like the active-duty soldiers.

Staff Sgt. Luke Hannon from the 182nd Infantry Regiment goes for a stroll down the Cape Cod Canal Bike Path. Unfortunately for him, this stroll happens to be 12 miles long and he is carrying a 60-pound rucksack during the final stage of the Expert Infantry Badge qualification.

Photo by Spc. David Claffey, STARC PAO

Spc. Jarred Hakala of Templeton looks down the sights of an M60 machine gun, one of the stations on the Expert Infantry Badge qualifications. Soldiers had to assemble, disassemble and have a complete understanding of the weapon.

- Photo by Spc. Matthew Benedetti, STARC PAO



Over a four-day span, soldiers qualified on a variety of weapon tasks from activating a Claymore mine to taking apart and assembling an M-60 machine gun. The training culminated in a 12-mile road march with a 60-pound rucksack that Guardmembers had to complete in less than three hours.

"This process is so grueling," said Aparicio, "but even if a guy doesn't pass, it is some of the best training they can get. You have to know each task in and out, or else you're done."

Soldiers weren't left in the dark though. Units spent the first half of their AT training for the test.

"Instructors gave us extra attention and made sure we were squared away," said Spc. Jarred Hakala of Templeton. Hakala was one of 12 to earn the EIB and felt the experience would be helpful in preparation for a possible deployment or elite

infantry schools.

All participating soldiers were highly motivated - a testament to the innovative training methods employed by Guard instructors.

"They did a great job," said 1st Lt. Michael Murphy of Somerville, who was pleased with the performance of the candidates. "Training and performance continues to improve. Everyone benefits from this type of course. Even if they do not get the badge, they reacquaint themselves with a whole range of infantry tasks."

Badge or no badge, the soldiers are trained to be the best. With the number of deployments recently, the training will help the 26th Infantry Brigade and the Massachusetts National Guard stay prepared for any mission.



With several miles and a few of his buddies behind him, Sgt. John Gomberg looks ahead to another four miles of hot, humid marching during the final portion of the 26th Brigade's Expert Infantry Badge qualifications on Cape Cod.

- Photo by Spc. David Claffey, STARC PAO



Senior Airman Sean Cahill took top honors at the U.S. Military Championship in Seven Springs, Pa. The Massachusetts National Guardsman finished the 120-mile race in just over five hours.

Nine months removed from the humidity and the heat of Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, Senior Airman Sean Cahill raised the temperature and opened eyes at the U.S. Military Road Race Championships, in the rolling hills of Western Pennsylvania.

On the Title Trail

Story and Photos by Spc. David Claffey, STARC PAO

Sean Cahill, a member of the Massachusetts National Guard's 212th Engineering Installation Squadron in Milford, finished first among military riders at the U.S. Military Championships in Seven Springs, completing the grueling 120-mile course in just over five hours.

"It was, by far, the hardest race I have ever done," said Cahill, about the course that featured 12,000 feet of climbing and steep downhill sections where the cyclists reached speeds of 65 m.p.h. "Some of the best amateurs in the country were on hand, and with the level of climbing, I was hanging on for dear life."

While the course might not have been life threatening, it was taxing on the riders. Only 57 of the starting 140 cyclists completed the race.

The military portion of the race was only a small section of the larger U.S. National Championship race, in which he finished 30th overall, said Cahill. He stuck with the peleton (the lead group of cyclists) for most of the race, but dropped off at the tail end with 30 miles to go. Still, he was ahead of the other military riders by five minutes.

This is the first attempt at a military title for Cahill, who had just qualified two weeks before the race. In his short, five-year racing career, the 30-year-old Cahill has risen the ranks to become one of the top amateur cyclists in the

country.

"I started out in mountain biking racing semi-pro for three years," said Cahill. Unfortunately, mountain biking was facing an economic decline. "Races got shorter, the competition thinned and the money dried up."

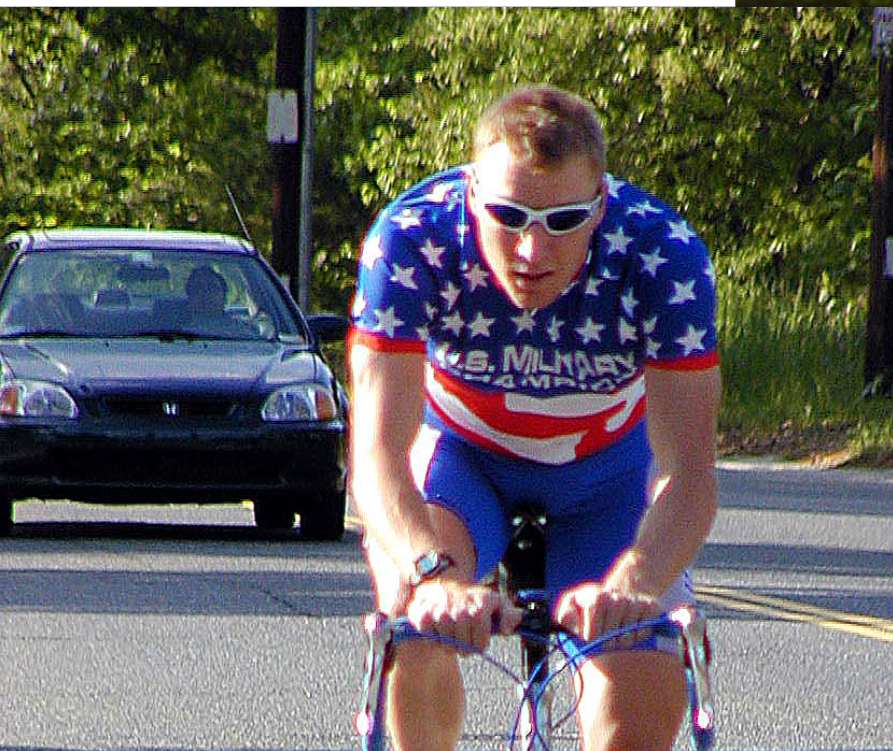
Cahill felt it was time to move on. He switched over to the road racing circuit two years ago, and has quickly made an impact. He has raced in events all along the East Coast, from Maryland to Maine, becoming the Massachusetts State Champion along the way. Even with his past accolades, the military title is what he is most pleased about.

"I never knew the race existed until a year ago," said Cahill. "I was stationed in Guantanamo Bay (Cuba), and a friend e-mailed me information about the event." After returning from the year-long deployment to both Cuba and Qatar in August 2002, he began training for the race.

He described his training schedule, which runs throughout the year. "I usually ride for 40 to 60 miles a day, for as long as three hours." And when the weather isn't cooperating, Cahill hits the weights or cross-country skis to keep up his endurance, though he prefers to be on his bike.

He is also a part of the Pro Cycles / Giant Cycling team, which has been a factor in his success.

"Racing is not an individual sport,"



he said, “it is a team sport. Other riders on the course are scared of strong teams. You have to be fit and ready to race, but the strongest guy doesn’t always win. Most of the time, it is a rider from the strongest team that wins.”

During a race, teammates set the pace, break the wind for team members and retrieve supplies for their top rider. Techniques like this have been used in cycling for years, with famous professional riders like Tour de France Champion Lance Armstrong relying heavily on his supporting cast. On Cahill’s team though, there is no one standout.

“We have no superstars, and when we race there is no firm plan,” he said. “The team is very flexible, so we wait to see how the race develops.”

While there is no one rider that stands out above the rest, each has strengths during the race.

“I am a climber,” said Cahill. “I tend to be skinny, so I don’t generate as much body power as some of the bigger guys for sprints, but I do well in the hills and in longer races.” Which is probably why he did so well in Pennsylvania. “If I have a good day, I can race with any amateur in the country.”

There is an All-Military team, featuring cyclists from the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines and Coast Guard, but Cahill has yet to be named a member because he is unable to attend the World Military Championships in September.

“It’s unfortunate we won’t be able to consider Cahill for our team that will compete,” said Klaus Wolf, Armed Forces Cycling Team Coach. “He and

his wife have a child due in early September so we understand his priorities. Sean would certainly be an asset to our team and we hope to make him a part of the program beginning next year.”

Cahill hopes he can, too.

“It has been a goal of mine to get on the team since I first heard about it,” he said, “but with school and a baby on the way, my wife Theresa and I didn’t see it happening this time around.” A student at UMass Lowell, Cahill is pursuing a degree in mechanical engineering.

In a short period, Cahill has worked his way from being a Category 5 rider to a Category 1 rider, the last level before becoming a professional. But for Cahill, turning pro is not one of his goals.

“I plan to finish my degree, go to graduate school, get my commission in the Guard and race for the military team,” he said. Until then, he has a new champion’s jersey and child soon to follow. For that, he is happy.

Making a meal

Story and Photos by Staff Sgt. Nate Orme, 3rd Personnel Command

Coming soon, Arifjan will be sporting a new food court complete with an assortment of American-style fast food and a shaded eating area right between the base swimming pool, Frosty's bar, and the movie theater.

Unlike most of the permanent structures on base constructed by local civilian contractors, the food court was designed and is being built by Army personnel, namely, soldiers from New England Guard and Reserve units.

"This has been an excellent way to stay motivated," said Spc. Doug Crowell, a survey drafter with the Massachusetts National Guard's 180th Engineer Detachment from Hyannis on Cape Cod. Crowell, a graduate student in landscape architecture at the Rhode Island School of Design, designed the food court. He will use it as a school project on his return to the U.S. "Since I'm missing school this year, I'm trying to make this experience as valuable as I can," said Crowell, who also has a bachelor's degree in English from the University of Vermont.

Spc. Doug Crowell, left, uses a smoothing tool on wet concrete at the new Arifjan food court.

The food court concept was first developed through the Directorate of Public Works, which manages construction and maintenance projects on base.

It was determined that the new post exchange facility needed to be augmented with more food vendors, said Staff Sgt. William Wessel, a construction supervisor with the 180th and a project manager for Turner Construction Company in Boston.

"We worked with the DPW commander, Lt. Col. Andrew Stewart, and got feedback from Lt. Col. Richard Odom, the zone one base support battalion commander, and Maj. Gen. Stratman,

Deputy Commanding General of Army Central Command to come up with a draft and a schedule," Wessel said.

"I wanted our guys to do it (rather than a contractor). It would give the soldiers something worthwhile and lasting to do and it provides training for the soldier," said Wessel.

The 180th got the job, and the first thing they did was a topographical survey. "We got the grade and elevation and dumped the data into a computer program (Eagle Point and AutoCAD) to create a surface model. We had to come up with a design where we wouldn't have to cut a lot out or bring a lot of fill in," Crowell explained.

The project called for four food concession stands and an eating area under a fabric sunshade. Crowell came up with two plans; the first being a simple grid-pattern layout just to fulfill the requirements of the project; the second taking a little leeway by having a more artistic design.

The Army decided to go with the second plan.

By having soldiers build the food court, the Army is saving \$250,000 vs. hiring civilian contractors, mainly through saving on labor costs, said Wessel, adding, "It's a win-win situation. We have a mission and we're still pumping money into the local economy by buying local material."

Due to the intense summertime heat in Kuwait, work is done in the evenings. The engineers arrive at the site at 5 p.m. and work until about 1 a.m. Much of the work consists of pouring concrete into molds constructed of wooden forms. Both sand at the site, as well as commercial sand, called gatch, is being used for the foundations and pathways.

At first, getting enough personnel was a challenge, according to Crowell. "The extra personnel from 368th (368th Combat Heavy Engineers, a Reserve unit from Attleboro, Mass.) have been a huge help. We have seven from my company working here. There is another surveyor, two electricians, a plumber, and a heavy equipment operator," Crowell said.



Spc. Dion Hernandez, left, and Sgt. Albert Gesualdi take a level measurement while building a wall for the Arifjan food court.



Guard hits the airwaves

Story by Spc. David Claffey, STARC PAO

Members of the Massachusetts National Guard Amateur Radio Club (call sign KB1IIF) came together for the first time last month to participate in the Amateur Radio Relay League's annual field day.

The group of ham radio enthusiasts consists of active and retired guard members, who took to Camp Edwards for the event.

"Ham radio is a hobby, but it can be an important tool in case of emergency," said Chief Warrant Officer Jim Oliveto, the club trustee and ham radio operator for many years. "We used the field day to train outside our normal environment. If something does happen, we need to be ready for any condition."

Radio operators are called upon more often than you might think, said Oliveto. Power outages, tornados or any event that could disrupt traditional communications don't affect Ham radios. All the equipment can be run off generators and independent



Sgt. 1st Class Debbie Barnet and Staff Sgt. Scott Masury copy down incoming communications during the Amateur Radio Club field day at Camp Edwards.

- Photo by Chief Warrant 4 Jim Oliveto, STARC

power supplies.

The Military Affiliated Radio Service is a network of military and independent Ham radio operators designated for that very purpose. When telephone lines jammed after the New York City attacks, radio operators stepped up to the challenge.

"These people are all volunteers," said Oliveto. "They were a major player after (September 11, 2001) acting as relays between different emergency personnel all along the East Coast.

The members' newly formed club looks to fill that role, but also enjoys the exciting aspects of being an operator.

"You find yourself talking to people in places you never expect to hear from," said Sgt. Maj. John Stroschio, Chief Operations NCO for the Deputy Chief of Staff Operations. "Almost everyone around the world speaks English. Sometimes you think your talking to someone in the United States and find out he is in Europe."

Conversations between countries are usually friendly, he said. "The topics vary. People discuss what they do for a living, technical information and weather. Politics rarely comes up."

The Guard club is still looking for more members regardless of experience. For more information, contact Jim Oliveto at (508) 233-7373.

Crowell said the project has taught him a great deal that cannot be learned in academia. "It's great to get out of the office and get some calluses on our hands. This project has actually humbled me, rather than make my head swell," he said of the challenges while helping to physically build the structure after designing it. Crowell, 28, lives with his wife Melissa in Rhode Island and has two more years of school. After graduation, he may attend Officer Candidate School and eventually would like to run his own landscape firm.

"I was taken right out of A.I.T." (Advanced Individual Training; after basic training), Spc. Dion Hernandez said. Hernandez, serving with the 368th, was transferred from his unit near Lima, Ohio to take part in Operation Iraqi Freedom as a 51B, or carpentry and masonry specialist. He works in the same field at Schroeder Masonry in Ohio.

Aside from building the food court, the 180th, commanded by Capt. Shawn Cody, is assigned to fill the utility function on base, building and maintaining numerous operations here. After being deployed in October, the 180th stayed in Ft. Drum until moving to Germany on Dec. 21 and then arriving in Kuwait on Christmas Day.

"One of our first missions was to set up the Zone 2 vendor area in December and January. We installed electrical

hookups, flooring and shelves in the PX and helped vendors get online," said Wessel.

In addition, the 180th, which numbers about 50 soldiers, painted the pool and got the filters operational before turning it over to the CSA (Combat Support Associates). The unit also operates the water tower filters, commissioned a fuel point, and handles plumbing problems on base, among other things.

The 180th also built the wooden bar in Frosty's, next door to the food court. "We bring a lot of assets to the table here. We have a custom home builder who builds million dollar custom homes in Cape Cod," said Wessel, referring to Sgt. Joseph Mullin, the designer of Frosty's bar. "We have master plumbers and electricians who do this for a living. I think the quality of our work compares well to contracted work," stated Wessel, who has been accepted to Warrant Officer Candidate School as a construction utility supervisor. Wessel lives with his wife, Vicky, and four children, including a newborn that arrived in April, in East Sandwich, Mass.

The food court opened in mid-July and will include a Pizza Inn, a Nathan's Hotdogs, a Burger King, and a Snow Cone. The 180th Engineers redeployed back to the States in August.

The Guard on Guard

Story by Capt. Winfield Danielson, STARC PAO

For the first time since WWII, members of A, B, C and HQ Companies of the 1st Battalion 181st Infantry will deploy overseas together. Over 300 soldiers will deploy for a year to Cuba in support of operations at Camp Delta, a security camp for detainees held as suspected terrorists. They will provide force protection and a reactionary force to counter potential terrorist threats against the base.

This is the second mobilization for many unit members since September 11th, 2001. Unit members served in

Bosnia and supported homeland defense missions in 2001 and 2002.

Approximately 100 members each from A Company, Worcester, B Company, Gardner, C Company, Cambridge and 30 soldiers from Headquarters Company, Worcester will depart for the mobilization station to receive additional certification and training before deploying to Cuba. Soldiers from the 182nd and 104th Infantry were also transferred into the unit to bring it up to full strength for the mission.

The soldiers gathered in Worcester,

Mass. August 5 for an official sendoff ceremony attended by an estimated 600 family and friends. Wishing the soldiers well were Governor Mitt Romney, U.S. Congressman James McGovern, Worcester Mayor Timothy Murray, Massachusetts' Adjutant General Maj. Gen. George Keefe, State Area Commander Brig. Gen. Gary Pappas and other civilian and military officials.

The unit carries a tradition of service dating back to its formation as part of the Mass. Bay Colonial Militia's North Regiment in 1636.

The Cup on the Line

Story and Photos by Pfc. Sven Jally, 101st Field Artillery

Two Bay State artillery units faced-off for the 1st Annual "Regimental Cup" Hockey Challenge at the Bridgewater ice arena on Armed Forces day.

Soldiers from the 101st Field Artillery Red Legs took on the newly formed Gunners from the 102nd Field Artillery Battalion, with the two teams battling to a four-all tie.

The Gunners jumped out to an early lead with a goal from Pfc. Thomas Lynch with assists going to Sgt. James O'Neil and Maj. Mark Ray. A second goal came from Gunner Sgt. Chris Cobb assisted by both Capt.

Peter Fiorentino and Sgt. Maj. Dennis Flynn to end the first period.

With the Gunners players' average age of 23 years, they had an early advantage over the more seasoned Red Legs, who were 10 years older than their fellow Artillerymen.

In the third period the Red Legs lit the lamp for a second goal when Maj. Jack Parsons fired a wrist shot from the right point. Half way through the third period the Red Legs struck again when 2nd Lt. Michael Barrett rifled a shot into the net bringing the score to three goals apiece. Several Gunner power plays were stifled by aggressive fore-checking from Pfc. John Tremblay, Sgt. 1st Class Mike

Lemaire, and Sgt. 1st Class Warren Ames.

Both teams added another goal before time ran out, forcing the game into an overtime shootout. Four players from each team had a chance to win the game, but it was Lt. Col. Sterling McLeod of the Red Legs, whose goal won the game, beating Gunner goaltender Capt. Scott Sanfason.



101st Field Artillery Red Leg Lt. Col. Sterling McLeod takes it to 102nd Field Artillery Gunner Goaltender Capt. Scott Sanfason for the deciding goal in the 1st annual Regimental Cup game.



Computer Killers

Story and Photos by Sgt. Jordan St. John, STARC PAO

A couple of hundred members of the 26th Infantry Brigade of the Massachusetts Army National Guard spent part of this summer in Kansas doing their annual training during an intensive training exercise at the Army National Guard's Battle Command Training Center at Fort Leavenworth.

The 26th Brigade soldiers were among approximately 1,200 soldiers of the 29th Infantry Division (Light) who took part in the intense computer-simulated war exercise. In addition to the Massachusetts Guard soldiers, the division includes units based in Virginia, Maryland, Connecticut and North Carolina.

Massachusetts Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. George Keefe, visited the training center during the exercise and said the operation was a great opportunity for all elements of the 29th Division to work with counterparts from the other states in a real-world training exercise. "Coordination is the key to success on the modern battlefield," said Keefe. "This Warfighter Exercise is a significant opportunity for our soldiers to get cutting-edge training."

According to military leaders participating in the Warfighter Exercise, the computer simulation training is the most effective way to train since it brings the entire division staff together in one place to work an extensive and complicated mock warfare training. With thousands of soldiers scattered through five states, the exercise at the Kansas battle center is a cost-effective way to conduct staff level training.

For Spc. Stephen R. Mastronardi of Chicopee, the exhausting heat of the battle operations gave him a chance to put his training as an intelligence analyst to the test. "From my viewpoint, this was the real thing," he said. "We had to use all our training to coordinate with the many elements in a combat situation to beat the enemy." In this case, the enemy was a computer-driven scenario that tested all elements of the brigade to the upmost of their abilities.

While the conflict was not real, the Battle Command Training Center staff ran the computerized exercise to match the stress of what combat division staff element soldiers would face in the event of real war.

"Warfighter is a major challenge. It's the kind of challenge I saw when I played baseball. It's good to play the game well. It's great to win and in this case it's important to win in the context of this training," said Maj. Gen. Daniel E. Long, 29th Division commander. Long led the division forces during the intensive exercise.

Using complicated scenarios from the post Cold War era to Iraqi Freedom, division staff elements taking part in an operation called Omaha Fury were put to the test on their military decision making skills.

And, while there were plenty of dead computer icons on the screens, all the soldiers learned some valuable lessons and returned home safely.



Spc. Stephen R. Mastronardi plots the location of forces engaged in ground combat during a battle training exercise held at the Army National Guard's Battle Command Training Center in Leavenworth, Kansas. The Chicopee native was one of 1,200 soldiers of the 29th Infantry Division (Light) who took part in the intensive training exercise during their annual training this summer.

(From right to left) MSG John Bruni, Intelligence NCO with the 26th Infantry Brigade, explains the progress of the battle during the Warfighter training exercise to Major Gen. George Keefe, Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Belanger (standing). Col. Manny Constantine.



To Dad with Love

Story and Photos by Spc. Matthew Benedetti, STARC PAO

She sits under the same hot sun, but Jillian Russell is a world away from her father, who is serving in the Middle East with the Massachusetts National Guard's 110th Maintenance Company, which is based out of Ayer, Mass. She reluctantly watches the news and waits for word from the Persian Gulf.

Although her neighbors are enjoying the California sunshine, she is reminded of the desert sun, which cooks eggs in short order on any rock. Her father, Sgt. James Russell, is also a captain in the Worcester Fire Department, so she is accustomed to the uncertainty.

An aspiring singer, she has co-written and recorded a song, "To Dad with Love" in tribute to her father and all service members. Jillian sent the CD to Sgt. Russell for Father's Day and he told her how important it was to the unit.

Amid the confusion of war and turmoil in their lives, this song has been an inspiration to the men and women of the 110th Maintenance Company. Jillian is thrilled the song is a hit with the soldiers and her dad says that it helps "keep them strong." Sgt. Russell has been in the Massachusetts National Guard for 17 years.

"He is a tough guy, he was involved in fighting the tragic Worcester warehouse fire on December 3, 1999. I know he can handle himself," said Jillian. "He is such a hero, family and country come before anything."

The writing and recording of the song was therapeutic, "I needed to focus my nervous energy somewhere, and it really helped me get through a difficult time." She put her emotions to paper with the help of family friend, Roxanne Pittman. "We wrote the song not too long after my dad left. It was hard for me because I could not speak to him. I was sorting out all of these emotions and then everything came out onto paper," Jillian remembered.

Recently, Ms. Russell was interviewed on WXLO radio and her song has been played on a frequent rotation by many other stations. Jillian's mom, Janice, and co-writer Roxanne Pittman have been busy answering calls from radio personnel and fans of the song. "One veteran who served in the Gulf called to say how proud he was to hear it. Several relatives of deployed soldiers have called to tell us how much it means to them. Some tell me they cry when it is on the radio," said Janice.

Mrs. Pittman sent the CD to Top 40 icon Casey Kasem and received a personal call from him, "He said how much he loved the song and that the country really needs a morale boost. I was stunned and couldn't believe it was him."

Sgt. Russell's comrades in the Worcester Fire Department are anxious for his return. "We miss him and hope he is ok," said Lt. Robert Haslett. On a lighter note he added, "I can't wait to see how much weight he has lost."

The song has become popular among the troops overseas and was played on Westwood One during the July 4th holiday. Jillian is excited about the response, but would trade it all for her dad's safe return. "Everyday I wake up and think of him," she said. "We cannot forget that American soldiers are in danger across the world. I hope that my song can help remind people."



The success of "To Dad with Love" has been a welcome distraction for Sgt. James Russell's daughter, Jillian, and his wife, Janice, as they wait for his safe return. Sgt. Russell is serving with the 110th Maintenance Company (Ayer, Mass.) in the Middle East.

Playing around in Germany

Story and Photos by Staff Sgt. George Young, STARC PAO

CW4 James Girard raises his baton... there is a moment of silence before it slices smoothly downward through the air. The 215th Army Band begins to play.

For two weeks in July the 215th Army Band from Fall River, Massachusetts, conducted their 2003 annual training in Germany. The 215th AB replaced their active duty counterpart, the US Army Band Europe, stationed at Thompkins Barracks, Schwetzingen, Germany.

There is plenty of work for the 215th in Europe. Change of command ceremonies, concerts, and rehearsals keep this energetic band from Massachusetts busy. With the 215th Army Band handling the workload, the US Army Band allows its members to take a well-deserved vacation.

The 215th Band was chosen as a replacement in light of the band's past performance. Commander Girard from Cotuit, said that "it's a great honor for us to be chosen and it reflects on the

professionalism of the men and women of the 215th AB to be chosen for a mission like this because it's high visibility."

The 95-degree plus heat wave that came over Kaiserslautern, Germany did not stop the 215th from accomplishing their mission. They have to be on call for any occasion regardless of the weather. Staff Sgt. Michael Kokoszka of Franklin says, "We have to practice even if it gets canceled." On many afternoons band members will rehearse for an upcoming event, only to have it canceled on the expected day of the performance. "We still have to be ready to go," said Kokoszka.

In addition to practicing with each member's individual instrument, 215th AB members are required to maintain their soldier skills just like all other National Guard

soldiers who train to regular Army standards. "We take care of our common task training, weapons qualification, APFT, we do all those things. We run our own ranges when we go and qualify, our people are trained to do that," said Girard.

The result of all the musical training, rehearsing, and extra drill and ceremony is really a great sight to see and hear. With impeccable timing and precision marching, the Massachusetts National Guard's 215th Army Band really gets the job done.

While playing



Percussionist soldiers from the 215th Army Band bangs their way across a field in Kaiserslautern, Germany during the unit's annual training.

Spc. Samuel Costa of Somerset plays his trumpet at a change of command ceremony with the 215th Army Band in Kaiserslautern.



during AT, the 215th AB underwent an inspection. "That can be a little nerve racking when you're having a technical inspection while you're trying to perform," said Girard. At the end of the inspection the rater, usually an active duty bandmaster will give his opinion and any recommendations on how to improve the bands performance.

"Keep in mind that most of the people in the band are musicians, or going to school majoring in music or in some cases are professional musicians," said 1st Sgt. Lawrence Menard, from Fairhaven. "And many people try to get into the band, but are just not good enough."

"We're able to take the place of our full time counterparts," said Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Perry from Somerset, Mass. These are part time soldiers back-filling for full-timers. If you didn't know the National Guard was in Germany, you would never know the difference. The incoming and outgoing commanders at the change of command ceremonies give the 215th high praise for their military professionalism and endlessly thanked them during the ceremonies.

Running to Remember

Story and Photos by Spc. Matthew Benedetti, STARC PAO

On a day more suited for marine activities, more than 500 dedicated runners braved the driving rain to complete the 20th annual POW/MIA road race on June 22. The Massachusetts Army National Guard provided organizational and logistical assistance to the event.

The annual race is held at Castle Island in South Boston, and has become a cherished tradition among runners and veterans in Massachusetts. Maureen Dunn, founder of the race, established the event 20 years ago to create awareness for the cause of missing servicemembers.

Many of the participants are veterans or have relatives serving abroad in the war on terrorism. The event started as a means to help support families of missing Vietnam servicemembers, but it has since evolved into a cause raising awareness for missing military personnel from all wars. All funds raised go to the POW/MIA "Awareness Committee."

Dunn is "carrying the torch" for her husband Joseph, who is still missing in Southeast Asia.

Jim Pitts of Billerica, who served as a medic in Vietnam, had a great time despite the rain. "It is a fun time and it is

important to raise awareness of this issue," he said. His daughter, Amy, ran for the first time and will be back next year.

"It is a great event that recognizes all veterans," said Ann Marie Fredericks, a Veterans Administration nurse, who ran with her daughter Meredith. Both finished with medals.

Dunn is hoping to raise enough money to have a POW/MIA eternal flame monument constructed at Boston City Hall Plaza. The cost is \$465,000 and the awareness committee will continue to vigilantly pursue this goal. "We have been trying for 20 years to keep this issue alive in the hearts and minds of our nation's leaders," said Dunn.

Though the sun was AWOL, the day was a success and the participants took heart in their accomplishment and in the knowledge that they were running to honor our missing service members.



Runners hit the midway point of the 6.2 mile course during the 20th annual POW/MIA road race at Castle Island in South Boston.

Borderline Healthcare

Story by Spc. Christine Caplis and Capt. Jeff Loughlin, 118th Area Support Medical Battalion

"MEDEVAC, MEDEVAC, MEDEVAC, All operations cease, clear all roads, radio communications cease!"

Just 100 yards from the United States and Mexico border in Southern California, a call comes across the radio from a Field Medic assigned to the Massachusetts National Guard's A Company, 118th Area Support Medical Battalion. Within moments, several medics move to the accident location and begin to assess, treat and evacuate casualties.

Sponsored by the California Innovative Readiness Training Group, the unit supported the United States Border Patrol and Task Force Engineer, a sub-

command of the California Counter Drug Task Force.

Along the 157 miles of the United States and Mexico border, Task Force Engineers, with assistance of rotational National Guard and Reserve units, are working with the US Border patrol to construct fencing and border road improvements to help hinder the drug traffic into California, and throughout the US.

During the four week annual training period, the unit provided medical support for engineers from Kansas, Tennessee and California.

The Mass. soldiers are recent recipients of the new 91W MOS that

advances the clinical skills and capabilities of the basic field medic to new standards.

Each soldier now must obtain and sustain civilian certifications as a nationally registered EMT, Pre-Hospital Trauma Life Support, CPR, and a military Trauma, Airway, Intubation, Medication and Shock certification.

In addition to the field medics, several other soldiers from the 118th helped out, providing support with patient administration, lab work, dental and X-ray technicians.

They provided full-time support to the Balboa Naval Medical Center in downtown San Diego, CA.

SEEM's to be the Best

Story by Capt. Lisa Ahaesy, 102nd Fighter Wing

Chief Warrant Officer William C. Bouchard Sr.'s boss describes him as the best State Equal Employment Manager (SEEM) in the business — and the nation agrees.

"He's one of the most empathetic, caring and sensitive human beings I've met in a long, long time. He's perfect for this job," said Lt. Col. Thomas Desmond, Deputy Director of Human Resources for the Massachusetts National Guard.

Bouchard is the State Equal Employment Manager for the Massachusetts National Guard. He was recognized as the top SEEM in the nation's 54 states and territories during the Chief Master Sgt. Benito "Benny" Saucedo Jr. Meritorious Service Awards Banquet held as part of the Third Annual National Guard Bureau Equal Opportunity/Equal Employment Opportunity Training Conference in Boston recently. The award is presented yearly by the National Guard Bureau to a SEEM in recognition for outstanding achievement in the field of Equal Employment

Opportunity. The conference, which was hosted by the Massachusetts National Guard, was held at the Seaport Hotel in Boston.

SEEMs handle all complaint processes for both Army and Air personnel in the state and serve as mediators and/or facilitators during a complaint process. They also manage the state's Military Equal Opportunity Programs, which deals with the military processing of claims. As the Massachusetts National Guard's SEEM, Bouchard also handles the state's community outreach programs and special emphasis groups as they relate to diversity and equal employment opportunity. He serves on the Federal Diversity Group, specializing in programs relating to women, Hispanics, African, Asian and Native Americans. Bouchard also serves as chairman of the New England Regional SEEM

Committee dealing with regional issues.

On the national level he serves as the Senior Northeast representative for the National Guard EEO/EO Committee representing seven states in the region. He is also on the National Equal Employment Manager's Advisor Board dealing with national SEEM issues.

"I feel honored and humbled to be selected for this award," Bouchard said, "The state has supported me on a number of occasions

and without that support this would not have come to fruition."

Mr. Bouchard said, "It's nice to have the support from the top. If I couldn't get leadership to support the issues, then it would have been very difficult. I am thankful that my bosses supported me each time I asked," he said. "Teamwork is very important."



School Children 'Touch a Truck'

Story by 2nd Lt. Anthony Falvey, 79th Troops Command

Students from the New Ludlow Elementary School, Worcester, were greeted by National Guard members from A Company, 118th Medical of Concord and Headquarters Company, 181st Engineer Battalion of Whitinsville as part of 'Fun Day'.

"As soon as the students noticed the big green Army trucks you could sense their excitement," said Dr. Sheila A. Graham, principal of New Ludlow.

'Fun Day,' was held June 5, and sponsored by the New Ludlow Elementary School Parents/Teachers Organization in partnership with the Army National Guard specifically for the students to have fun. June Norton of the 181st Engineer Battalion is president of the PTO.

After participating with a 'touch a truck' event held at Camp Edwards in 2001, she wanted the opportunity to have the event incorporated with the fun at New Ludlow. The rest of the fun scheduled for the day included a temporary tattoo booth, water balloon races and cookie decorating.

This is the first time that 'touch a truck' has visited New

Ludlow. Touch a truck was created for area children who enjoy exploring military vehicles and asking questions about them.

Norton, along with the assistance of her husband (both from Worcester) Michael, a medic with A Company, 118th Medical recruited Spc. Marcia White (from Webster) and Pfc. Ryan Murphy (from Northbridge) of the Headquarters Company 181st Engineer Battalion to transport two military vehicles and have them ready for 'touching.'

The touching involved the students getting up close and personal with the ambulance vehicle and a 2 and 1/2 ton truck. Norton, White and Murphy thoroughly enjoyed answering the student's questions as well as assisting the youngsters when they entered and exited the vehicles.

The student's questions ranged from, "Are we going for a ride in the big truck?" to "How many soldiers can fit in the back of the ambulance?"

Due to the overwhelming student interest with touch a truck at New Ludlow, this is an event that is sure to be considered for Fun Day next year.

Saluting the nation

Story by Spc. Matthew Benedetti, STARC PAO

On a spectacular day in the City of Boston over 700,000 folks from around the country enjoyed the July 4th holiday on the Esplanade. A nationwide CBS audience and military personnel deployed around the globe tuned into the Armed Forces Network were treated to impressive displays including a flyover by fighter planes from the 102nd Fighter Wing.

It was truly a special day highlighted with performances by the Boston Pops, Leann Rimes, the Mormon Tabernacle choir and the canon blasts of the Massachusetts National Guard's 101st Field Artillery.

The canon salute in the "1812" overture symbolized the patriotic mood of the huge crowd that refused to be intimidated by terror. National Guard soldiers supplemented a strong State Police presence in and around the Esplanade area.

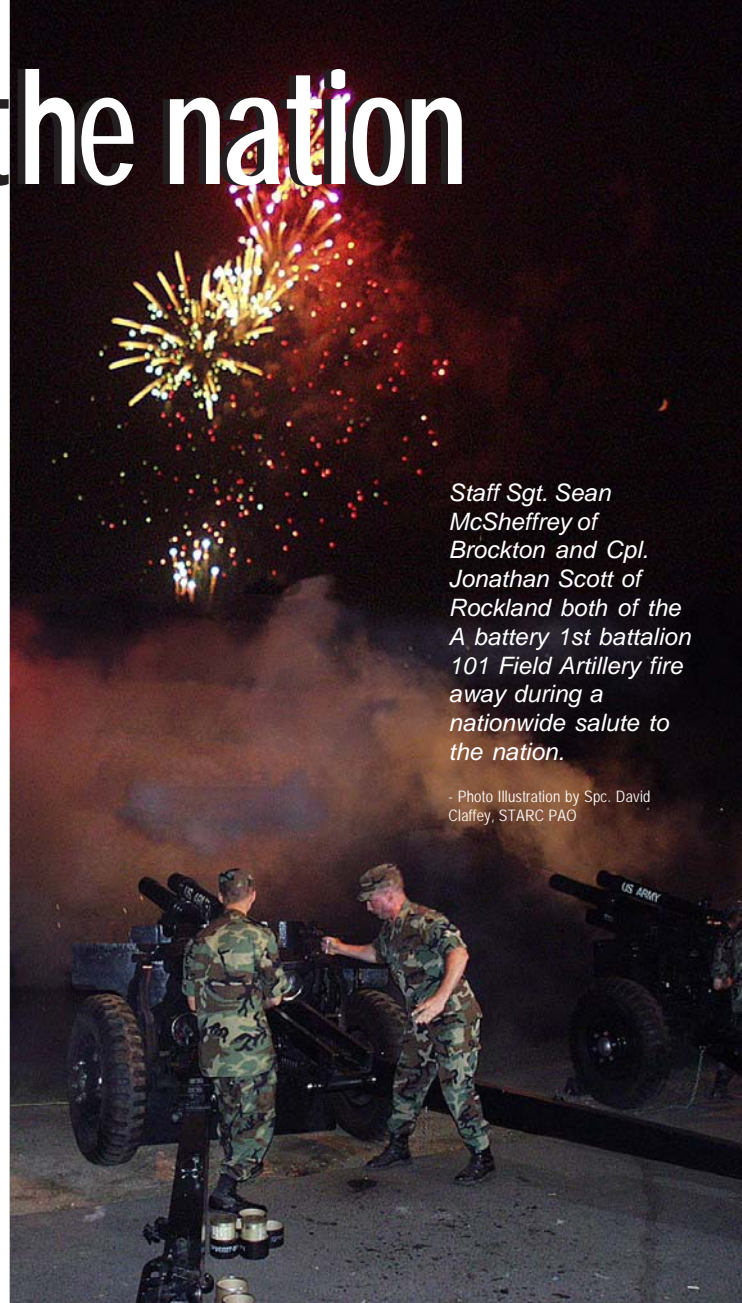
"We have an outstanding relationship with the Guard, by combining our technology and information, not just bodies, we improve our resources," said Lt. Maureen McGovern, spokes-

person for the Massachusetts State Police. The increased cooperation between the State Police and the National Guard is more common since 9/11.

Soldiers from the 1st Battalion 182nd Infantry, based in Dorchester, were charged with monitoring the crowd and patrolling the perimeter of the Hatch Shell, the center of activities. Also, Guardsmen patrolled across the Charles River in Cambridge to provide additional security.

The 182nd provided security last year and were proud to be involved again. "The crowd has been very receptive," said Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Walsh, of Plainville. "We can't complain about losing a holiday with so many people overseas. We are glad to do it."

Brig. General Gary Pappas, commander of the Massachusetts Army National Guard, and members of his command staff visited Guardmembers throughout the Esplanade and across the river. Pappas made sure that everyone had plenty of water and was properly supported.



Staff Sgt. Sean McSheffrey of Brockton and Cpl. Jonathan Scott of Rockland both of the A battery 1st battalion 101 Field Artillery fire away during a nationwide salute to the nation.

- Photo Illustration by Spc. David Claffey, STARC PAO

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